

# QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS REGARDING CONNECTICUT'S CAMPAIGN FINANCE LAWS - 2000

## Report Filing

- 1. I am treasurer of a candidate committee which was established on June 2, 2000. For the reporting period which ended July 6, the committee received \$200 and had unpaid bills of \$800. For the next reporting period which ended October 5, 2000, the committee received \$5,325 and expended \$4,178. Which forms must I use to comply with my disclosure requirements for the filing due dates of July 13 and October 12, respectively?**

The treasurer of a candidate committee is permitted to file an exemption from itemized reporting form (ED-46) for each reporting date until the committee has raised or expended more than \$1,000 in the aggregate for the campaign. Therefore, the treasurer may file on July 13 using form ED-46, but must file the itemized statement of receipts and expenditures, form ED-45, for the October 12 filing date, including all contributions and expenditures from June 2.

- 2. My candidate won the September 12 party primary. As his treasurer, must I file the 30-day post primary report?**

No. The post primary filing requirements are applicable only to committees of candidates who were unsuccessful in the primary. The candidate committee of a successful candidate in the primary must follow the general election reporting schedule. Your next report is due on October 12 (quarterly filing).

- 3. I have a personal computer at home. I can generate campaign disclosure reports on my computer. Can I file these computer-generated reports or must I use the actual forms provided by the Secretary of the State's Office?**

You may use the computer generated reports provided these contain all of the information required and are in the same format as the State's forms. Moreover, you may also produce individual sections, such as Section B "Contributions from an Individual over \$30 in the aggregate" or Section N "Expenditures" to supplement the form provided by the Secretary of the State's Office.

## In Kind Contributions

- 4. If an individual donates the use of his vehicle for the use of others in a campaign, is this a contribution? If so, what is the value of the contribution for purposes of reporting and compliance with contribution limitations?**

The donation of property or goods to a campaign is considered an in kind contribution by the individual, and must be reported by the campaign treasurer. The law exempts

small donations of property or goods, not exceeding \$50 in value, but only if the property or goods are intended to be sold by the campaign at a fundraising event. In this example, the vehicle is assumed to be worth more than \$50 and will be used generally during the campaign. The value of the vehicle would be calculated as its fair rental value for the period used by the campaign. It is suggested that the treasurer contact a local car rental company to determine what the usual and customary rental price would be for the same or similar type vehicle.

**5. If the individual donates his services as a driver and uses his own personal vehicle to deliver campaign literature on one day, is this a contribution?**

The law exempts unreimbursed payment for travel expenses by individuals volunteering their services to the extent that the cumulative value does not exceed \$200 with respect to the election. Therefore, the individual has not made a contribution.

**6. If an individual uses his home to host a fundraiser for a candidate, and spends money on invitations, food and beverages, is this a contribution?**

There is a special exemption for out of pocket costs by an individual for a fundraiser at his residence. If the costs do not exceed \$200 per candidate, the individual has not made a reportable contribution. However, should the individual spend more than \$200, the entire amount is considered an in kind contribution which must be reported and is counted towards the individual's contribution limitation.

**7. May a candidate accept free or discounted use of office space for campaign headquarters?**

The donation of property at no cost or at a cost which is less than its fair rental value is an in kind contribution by the donor. The amount of the contribution of free office space is its fair rental value. Individuals, sole proprietorships and solely owned professional corporations (P.C.'s) are permitted to make contributions subject to overall limits per candidate. Corporations and partnerships are not permitted to make contributions. Therefore, a candidate is unable to accept free or discounted use of office space owned by a corporation or partnership.

## **Reporting of Campaign Receipts**

**8. Where do I report the receipt of a \$25 check from an individual?**

Section A of the treasurer's statement is used to report monetary contributions from donors who have not contributed more than \$30 in the aggregate to the committee as of the closing date of the report. If the same individual had previously made a \$10 contribution, then the treasurer must report the contributor's name, address, lobbyist status, and the amount of his aggregate contribution. Monetary contributions received from an individual which exceed \$30 in the aggregate for the campaign must be itemized in Section B.

**9. What are the responsibilities of a campaign treasurer concerning the identification of contributors who are also lobbyists?...concerning other contributor information?**

The law imposes responsibility on the contributor to notify the treasurer of his lobbyist status at the time that the contribution is made. If the contributor informs the treasurer (orally or in writing), the treasurer must include such identification on the report. If the contributor fails to inform the treasurer, then the treasurer is not liable for the missing information. The Commission recommends that for any solicitation of campaign funds, the treasurer should request the potential contributor to provide his lobbyist status (in addition to his full name and complete address).

Information on the contributor's name and residential address is required for all contributions. For contributions in excess of \$100 but not exceeding \$1,000 the treasurer must make a good faith effort to obtain information from the contributor concerning the donor's principal occupation and employer's name. Such good faith effort, in the case of a written solicitation for funds, would include that the solicitation contain a request for the donor's principal occupation and employer's name; in the case of an unsolicited contribution of more than \$100, the treasurer should make a written request for the information from the contributor. If the contribution is more than \$1,000 the treasurer is required to obtain this information, as well as an answer to the question *"Does the contributor or business he/she is associated with have a contract with the State valued at more than \$5,000?"* before the funds are deposited.

**10. If a town committee pays for a mailing on behalf of a candidate, how should it be reported by the candidate committee?**

The candidate committee would report the expenditure as an in kind contribution by the town committee in Section M of the treasurer's statement. By contrast, if the town committee provided the funds that the candidate committee used to pay for the mailing, the transfer would be reported in Section C as a monetary contribution from the town committee.

**11. Where should I report a gift of money from the candidate?**

A gift of money from the candidate to his committee, with no expectation of repayment, should be reported as "Personal funds of the candidate" in Section G. If the candidate expects the committee to repay him, the transaction is a loan which must be reported in Section I. *Note:* There are no limitations on the amount that a candidate may give or loan to his committee. By contrast, the candidate's spouse and family members are treated as any other individual and therefore are subject to the limitations on contributions applicable to an individual.

**12. Where would I report the donation of cakes by an individual which were sold at a committee fundraiser for \$35?**

The donation of the cake is not a contribution and not reported. The law excludes from the definition of “contribution,” the donation (and purchase) by an individual of goods to (or from) a committee at a fundraiser provided the aggregate value donated (or purchased) does not exceed \$50. There is no requirement to report an in-kind donation of goods or services which are not considered contributions. Therefore, the \$35 donation of cakes is not an in kind contribution. However, the treasurer is required to record the purchase of the cake, as all funds received by the committee need to be reported on the treasurer’s statement, regardless of whether the funds received are considered contributions or not.

## **Contribution Limitations**

**13. Can an individual who has contributed the maximum amount to the candidate for the election make additional contributions after the election to eliminate a deficit?**

No. The contribution limits are imposed by law on a per election (and per candidate) basis. No additional limitation is permitted to eliminate a deficit.

**14. Do in kind contributions count towards the individual’s contribution limitation?**

Yes. The law does not distinguish between monetary and in kind contributions for purposes of the limitation. All contributions by the individual count toward his limitation to that candidate.

**15. Does the spouse of a contributor have a separate contribution limitation?**

Yes. Note that a contribution made on a joint checking account is credited to the person who actually signs the check. If both signatures appear on the check, then the contribution is credited to each contributor equally (1/2 of the amount of the check).

**16. What are the limits on contributions in cash? How about money orders and negotiable instruments other than personal checks?**

Cash contributions are limited to \$50 per individual per candidate. The law also requires contributions exceeding \$100 to be made by personal check of the contributor. Contributions by a political committee (PAC) or a party committee must always be made by check. Money orders and bank checks are acceptable up to \$100.

**17. Can an individual who has contributed his limitation to a candidate committee also contribute to a political committee with the understanding that the contribution will be provided to the same candidate?**

No. “Earmarked” contributions made to a candidate committee through any intermediary committee (PAC or party committee) count against the donor’s limitation both to the candidate and the intermediary committee.

## Corporate Participation

### **18. May a corporation use corporate funds to make a contribution to or expenditure for the benefit of a candidate?**

No. The only type of corporation permitted to make campaign contributions or expenditures is a solely owned professional corporation (P.C.). Any corporation may establish a political committee and, upon compliance with the registration requirements, must receive voluntary contributions from individuals.

### **19. Are there any ways a corporation may lawfully participate in an election campaign other than by its political committee?**

Yes. Election laws provide various exceptions which permit corporate funds and facilities to be used in support of a candidate. Among the most common examples are:

- (a) in house partisan communications - a corporation may fund communications to its shareholders, directors, executive and administrative personnel, including expressions of support for a specific candidate and suggestions that contributions be made to the candidate. Such communication may not be made outside this restricted class of people unless it is funded by the corporation's registered political committee.
- (b) may donate goods or services to a candidate for a fundraising event provided the cumulative value donated does not exceed \$100 (exception applies on a per event basis).
- (c) may purchase an ad in a program booklet for a fundraising event sponsored by a candidate provided the cumulative purchase of ads by the same corporation does not exceed \$250 from any candidate (exception applies on a per election basis). Any entity or individual other than a business entity is limited to an ad purchase of \$50.
- (d) may allow candidates to address the restricted class (owners, stockholders, executive or administrative personnel, or their families) at a corporate meeting or other function, and these candidates may solicit contributions at the meeting or function.
- (e) may allow candidates to address other corporate employees outside the restricted class at a meeting or other corporate function provided that (a) solicitations and endorsements are avoided, and (b) an equal opportunity, if requested, is given to all other candidates seeking election to that office.

## Expenditures

### **20. Is a candidate committee permitted to expend funds on behalf of another candidate?**

No. The funds of a candidate committee must be used exclusively to support the candidate for whom it was established. If two or more candidates desire to share campaign headquarters or appear jointly in campaign advertising, each candidate

committee must pay the amount of the total cost of the expense which is equivalent to the benefit derived by that candidate.

**21. May a candidate be reimbursed by his candidate committee for his out of pocket campaign expenses?**

Yes, provided the expense is permitted by law and the candidate submits a receipt evincing his payment of the expense to the treasurer. A candidate may be reimbursed for any expense directly related to his campaign, but may not be reimbursed for contributions made to other candidates or committees. The candidate must itemize his expenses in Section P of the treasurer's statement (signed and dated by candidate) before the treasurer may reimburse him. Each reimbursement made to a candidate must also be reported in Section N as an expenditure.

**22. Must the treasurer disclose unpaid bills on the treasurer's statement?**

Yes. Each expense for goods or services incurred which has not been paid by the close of the reporting period must be itemized in Section O of the treasurer's statement. When the expense is actually paid, the treasurer must disclose it in Section N of the statement for the period in which it is paid.

## **Political Campaign Communications - Attribution Requirements**

**23. Whose attribution must be included on campaign literature which is printed and mailed by a party committee (state central or town committee) using it's bulk mail permit when the printing and mailing expenses are reimbursed by the candidate committee?**

The name of the candidate committee, the name of its treasurer and the name of the party committee must be included on the campaign literature. The use of a bulk mail permit constitutes an in kind contribution.

**24. How do the attribution requirements apply to campaign signs?**

The attribution requirements (paid for by...) apply to signs which exceed 32 square feet in size, but do not apply to lawn signs with smaller dimensions.

**25. Do attribution requirements apply to web sites?**

Yes. Please remember to include appropriate attributions on all web sites.

**26. Where can I get assistance in compliance with campaign financing requirements?**

The State Elections Enforcement Commission is ready, willing and able to provide you with assistance. Our office is located at 20 Trinity Street, Suite 101 in Hartford, 06106-1628. Office hours are 8:00 A.M. to 5:00 P.M., Monday through Friday. Our telephone number is 860-566-1776, fax number is 860-566-4402, our e-mail is [SEEC@po.state.ct.us](mailto:SEEC@po.state.ct.us) and our web address is [www.seec.state.ct.us](http://www.seec.state.ct.us).